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Scout Council Moves to Ban Sex Offender

By RICK MORIARTY

The mother of a 14-year-old girl who was allegedly sexually abused by a Boy Scout leader praised the Hiawatha Council of the Boy Scouts of America Wednesday night for moving to banish the man from the organization.

But the mother, who asked that she and her daughter not be identified, criticized the heads of Boy Scout Troop 65 in Liverpool for not also taking action to suspend the man from the group.

Donald Duerr, 29, of 132 Duerr Road, Liverpool, an assistant scoutmaster of Troop 65 for about 10 years, pleaded guilty Jan. 16 in Cicero Town Court to third-degree sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. He was arrested by Onondaga County deputies Jan. 10 and is scheduled for sentencing March 13 by Cicero Town Justice Harvey W. Chase.

Donald F. Blacker, scout executive of the Hiawatha Council, a regional board that oversees local troops, said Wednesday he will recommend to the national Boy Scout Council that Duerr be suspended and not be allowed to join the orga-

nization again.

Blacker said he decided to take the action this week after learning that Troop 65 leaders had declined to suspend Duerr from his position with the organization. The national council can override a decision by a local troop.

"I'm very pleased," the mother said. "We're (she and her husband) both elated at what the Hiawatha Council is doing."

But the woman said she was angry that Duerr was not suspended by the local troop.

"They (Troop 65 leaders) showed no respect, no regard for this family at all," the mother said.

The woman said the troop had not taken the charges against Duerr seriously enough.

"They're making light of it," she said. "It's just like, 'Oh well, it happened to them and not to us.' We're the ones being overlooked."

The mother said Duerr was a family friend and that he had been romantically involved with her daughter for about the past nine months despite warnings from the girl's parents to stay away from

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her.

The abuse involved Duerr "petting" the girl at a movie both attended Jan. 6 at Penn Can Mall, the mother said. No violence was involved, she added.

Duerr was reported to be supervising Boy Scouts at a state camping site in Oswego County Wednesday and could not be reached for comment.

William Morrison, chairman of the volunteer committee that oversees Troop 65, said the committee would have no comment until it discusses the matter with an attorney.

Gordon S. Johnson, a Liverpool Board of Education member and a member of the volunteer committee, said he did not participate in the decision not to suspend Duerr but he supports the committee's position. He said the committee may meet again to review the matter.

"I can understand why the committee acted the way it did," Johnson said. "...I would not vote to override the committee."

Johnson said a question has arisen within the committee as to whether Duerr realized the seriousness of the charges to which he pleaded guilty and whether the alleged incident involving the girl was "as bad" as it may appear. He added he had no firsthand information regarding the incident.

Troop 65 Scoutmaster William G. Chisholm could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Duerr had no lawyer with him at his arraignment, the proceeding at which he submitted his guilty plea.

Assistant Onondaga County District Attorney Thomas F. Shannon said it was unusual for a defendant to plead guilty at his arraignment, especially without the advice of a lawyer, but that the court had to accept the plea.

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